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Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child
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Summary record of the 2141st meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 19 September 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Muhamad Shariff (Vice-Chair)

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In the absence of Mr. Mezmur, Ms. Muhamad Shariff took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Second periodic report of South Africa (CRC/C/ZAF/2; CRC/C/ZAF/Q/2)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of South Africa took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Bogopane-Zulu** (South Africa) said that the South African Government had been working to reverse the effects of decades of systemic racism, which had caused widespread poverty and a rise in single-parent families and had particularly affected children with disabilities. A comprehensive social protection system had been established to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable, supported by a social security system that provided a range of services for children.

3. Twenty per cent of the national budget had been allocated to education, and interventions included subsidized early childhood education, free primary education and school meals schemes. The country's inclusive education policy had resulted in a significant increase in the number of children with disabilities placed in mainstream schools.

4. Children were being negatively affected by rapid urbanization, changes to family structures, HIV and AIDS and high levels of gender-based violence. Violence against children, in particular violence against children with disabilities, was common, and was being addressed by various mechanisms, including a telephone line for children, the prohibition of corporal punishment in schools and programmes that addressed teenage pregnancies.

5. As a destination country for migrants, South Africa had implemented inter-agency policies and programmes to assist unaccompanied migrant children. The trafficking of children was combated by legislation, including the amendments to the Children's Act that were currently under consideration by Parliament and that would enhance protection for children during the adoption process.

6. **Ms. Oviedo Fierro** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that the Committee was concerned by the lack of political leadership in the implementation of the Convention, particularly the subsuming of the rights of the child into the mandate of the Department of Social Development, the absence of an inter-agency coordination strategy and insufficient funding. She asked what technical, economic and political measures had been adopted to promote activities relating to the Convention. She requested clarification of the function and resources of the National Children's Rights Intersectoral Coordination Committee, including whether it could influence other sectors, whether its decisions were taken into account by other Government agencies and whether it coordinated the National Plan of Action for Children.

7. She asked what results had been achieved by the Plan of Action and whether its progress was reported periodically. Noting that the Plan was coming to an end, she asked whether a new one was being devised, whether it would be developed in coordination with the National Development Plan: Vision 2030, whether children were prominent in that Plan and whether the new National Plan of Action for Children would enable the full and effective participation of children, particularly for the most vulnerable. She wished to know what accountability mechanisms existed for the Plan and other public policies.

8. She asked how the State party's failure to gather data was being addressed, whether the indicators that had been defined with the assistance of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) were being implemented and, if so, who was responsible for that

implementation. There were concerns that many local authorities depended on civil society organizations to provide services without providing the necessary financial resources or involving them in discussions on public policy. She asked whether efforts to disseminate the Convention were systemic and targeted all groups of children, and whether public sector workers received training on the Convention.

9. The country's robust legislative provisions that allowed children to participate in decision-making were not effectively applied. She asked how children accessed information that allowed them to participate, why adolescents were not involved in discussions of all legislation, as was the case with the HIV strategy, and public policies, and why the different branches of Government took different approaches to children's participation. She wished to know whether the right to participation was promoted and monitored by a specific institution and whether funding was provided for such activities.

10. Noting that various rights, including the right to freedom of religion and to peaceful assembly, were applicable to children and adults equally under the Constitution, she asked what measures had been adopted to guarantee them, particularly in the light of reports of cases of incitation to hatred towards migrants. Lastly, she asked how children were protected from harmful information and from the dangers of social networking.

11. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** (Country Task Force) asked whether the State party had considered ratifying the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure. He wished to know whether a system was in place to monitor budgetary allocations and spending linked to the rights of the child, whether impact studies were undertaken to ensure that those rights were not negatively affected by budgetary decisions, whether public spending on children was audited, whether the financial requirements of legislation and policies addressing children were assessed to ensure that sufficient public resources were made available, what measures existed to prevent the diversion of funds and whether Government budgets adopted a child-based approach.

12. He asked whether a specialized commissioner for children would be created within the South African Human Rights Commission; whether the Commission enjoyed the necessary human, technical and financial resources to assist children; whether children were aware of the possibility of lodging complaints with the Commission and what awareness-raising campaigns had been carried out to that effect.

13. He wished to know how it was ensured that business activities, particularly mining, did not negatively affect children's rights; had studies on the impact of the chemical by-products of mining been completed? He would welcome information on advertising regulations in relation to children, with particular reference to the Human Rights Commission's studies in that area.

14. He asked how case law relating to the best interests of the child was disseminated to those working with children. Despite strong anti-discrimination provisions, inequality and structural discrimination remained a problem in South Africa, and he asked how those issues, and the structural inequality experienced by children in rural areas and informal urban settlements, were addressed.

15. South Africa had failed to meet the Millennium Development Goal on child mortality, and there was a high rate of child deaths from avoidable causes. He asked what measures existed to evaluate and address the causes of mortality for children of all ages.

16. **Ms. Khazova** (Country Task Force) said that the minimum age for marriage for those under 18 was different for boys and girls and according to the type of marriage. Furthermore, no specific minimum age was set for customary marriages, and they were not recorded. She asked how the various marriage regulations respected the Convention's

definition of the child; whether married minors lost the legal protections afforded to children and whether any changes in that regard were envisaged.

17. **Ms. Parsi** (Country Task Force), noting the very high rates of violence against children in the State party, said that the Committee was concerned by the prevalence of corporal punishment, which remained legal in private schools and homes. She asked what steps were being taken to prohibit all forms of corporal punishment in the home, to address violence against children in schools and to ensure that children's safety was guaranteed there.

18. She asked how the Government intended to ensure that people who were responsible for violence against children were appropriately dealt with by the criminal justice system. In addition, she asked how effective the steps that the Government had taken to protect children from vulnerability and exploitation had been and what the Government planned to do to develop and implement policies to prevent and respond to violence against children, including corporal punishment. She also wondered what plans had been made to promote a culture of respect for children and whether additional funds would be made available for services for child victims of violence.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 11.15 a.m.

19. **Ms. Bogopane-Zulu** (South Africa) said that the steps taken as part of the recent reorganization of the South African State had been intended to highlight the importance of children's issues. The Office on the Rights of the Child, an office of the Presidency, was no longer responsible for implementing programmes related to children's rights. It had been replaced in that role by the Department of Social Development and an intersectoral committee that included representatives of both Government and civil society. The Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities had been dissolved. The transfer of responsibility for children's issues to the Department of Social Development had gone some way towards solving a number of budgeting and coordination problems. An action plan designed to facilitate coordination had been put into place. Consultations, including with children, were currently being held with a view to bringing it into line with the National Development Plan 2030.

20. South African ministers and deputy ministers had entered into so-called performance contracts that involved a number of expected outcomes, 14 of which focused specifically on children's issues. Efforts had been made to enable the publication of more information about the situation of children in South Africa. The *South African Child Gauge*, for instance, was published annually by the Children's Institute of the University of Cape Town.

21. Efforts had also been made to ensure that children with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, could express their views on matters affecting them. Legal amendments, for instance, had provided for what had been referred to as assisted decision-making. The finishing touches were being put on a programme to institute instruction in South African sign language in the schools. The Children's Parliament, which was used by the Government to elicit the views of children, was an established institution at local and national levels.

22. Data collection had improved considerably, not least as a result of cooperation between the Department of Social Development and Statistics South Africa. Preparations for an upcoming survey on children up to 5 years of age, who had been identified in the 2011 census, were nearly complete. Information on the number of households headed by children or other young people was collected routinely.

23. The Non-profit Organizations Act (No. 71 of 1997) had recently been reviewed, and amendments to the Fundraising Act (No. 107 of 1978) were being finalized. Funding for

NGOs that provided services to children had not been cut; smaller allocations had instead been made to a larger number of organizations.

24. Awareness-raising campaigns had been launched to combat *ukuthwala* and other harmful traditional practices. The Traditional Affairs Bill, a draft of which was near completion, would address such practices comprehensively. Moreover, the Department of Health had worked directly with the Nguni people to lessen the impact of ritual circumcision on children. New legislation in the Eastern Cape, a province where ritual circumcision was widespread, had introduced a number of health-related measures in connection with the practice. In the past, women, not even single mothers, had had a say in matters relating to the circumcision of their children. That had changed. A number of initiation schools had been closed by the authorities, and in many cases their operators had been charged and convicted. Male circumcision was now the responsibility of trained medical personnel who were brought to initiation schools by traditional community leaders.

25. **Ms. Oviedo Fierro** said that she wished to know exactly which body was responsible for coordinating efforts to implement the Convention in the State party. She would also welcome specific information about the 14 outcomes related to children's issues. In addition, she asked whether all interested parties had access to the data collected by the State and its agencies and what the authorities did to help children who were accused of or victims of witchcraft.

26. **Ms. Sandberg** asked whether children born with intersex conditions were put through sex-assignment surgery before they were old enough to consent to the procedure. She also asked what the State party did to protect children with albinism.

27. **Ms. Khazova** asked why boys were circumcised in schools rather in clinics.

28. **Ms. Aho Assouma** asked what steps had been taken to combat the traditional administration of virginity tests.

29. **Ms. Bogopane-Zulu** (South Africa) said that ritual circumcision did not take place in ordinary schools or even in all parts of the country. It was a practice specific to particular groups. Unlike circumcision for medical reasons, which took place in health-care facilities, ritual circumcision was part of a longstanding rite of passage from boyhood to manhood. In an attempt to mitigate the impact of that rite, the authorities had sought the cooperation of traditional community leaders.

30. Responsibility for children's issues, including for coordinating efforts to implement the Convention, lay with the Department of Social Development, with the support of an intersectoral committee and task forces referred to as clusters. Virginity testing had not been criminalized, but efforts had been made to ensure that girls under 16 were not pressured into submitting to it. To some degree, however, the practice made it possible to identify girls who had been sexually abused.

31. The Department of Social Development was running an outreach campaign on the rights and inherent dignity of people with albinism, who had been subjected to considerable amounts of violence. A number of cases of such violence had resulted in the filing of criminal charges. The Government had organized events so that the parents of children with albinism and the children themselves could bring up issues of concern to them. Special schools afforded additional protection to such children.

32. The South African Human Rights Commission had launched campaigns to combat hate speech, and a number of people had been brought before the country's equality courts to answer charges related to hate speech, discrimination or harassment. In connection with the age of marriage, the Children's Act and the Constitution took precedence over the Marriage Act. Although it might seem as if the situation for children in South Africa was

worsening, the fact was that as South Africans grew to realize what constituted violence against children, they were more willing to report it.

33. **Ms. Khazova** said that it was her understanding that the age of sexual consent had been lowered from 16 to 12 years in the State party, to bring it into line with the minimum age of marriage. The delegation's views on the appropriateness of the new age of sexual consent and its correlation with the age of puberty would be welcome. She asked whether persons marrying girls under the age of 12 years were prosecuted and whether there were any plans to increase both the age of marriage and that of sexual consent.

34. **Ms. Bogopane-Zulu** (South Africa) said that steps had been taken to ensure that children aged 12 years or older were not criminalized for engaging in consensual sexual activities with other children of a similar age. An issue paper containing a proposal on raising the age of marriage to 18 years had been prepared.

35. **Mr. Dangor** (South Africa) said that the national authorities recognized that intersexuality was a sexual characteristic, rather than a medical condition, and they were working with medical establishments to prevent harmful surgery from being performed on newborns and infants in that regard.

36. **Ms. Kambula** (South Africa) said that, in the light of recent amendments to domestic legislation, consensual sexual activity between children aged between 12 and 16 years was legal, provided that the age difference between them was not greater than two years. It was a criminal offence for persons over the age of 16 years to engage in penetrative sex with a child under the age of 16 years.

37. **Ms. Sipmala** (South Africa) said that, in the past two years, over 400 sentences of life imprisonment had been handed down in cases of sex offences against children. The conviction rate for offences of sexual violence had risen from 48 per cent in 2000 to over 71 per cent in 2016. Over the past three years, specialized centres had dealt with more than 30,000 cases of sexual violence annually; 60 per cent of which had involved children. A victim-oriented approach was adopted in such cases, ensuring that child victims were appropriately dealt with when reporting offences. As to the question of *ukuthwala*, it was a traditional custom protected by the Constitution. However, abuses of that custom were prosecuted, with individuals having been sentenced to lengthy terms of imprisonment for offences of kidnapping, rape and under-age marriage.

38. **Ms. Bogopane-Zulu** (South Africa) said that, although South Africa did not have an allocated child budget system, a children's budget had been put in place, which was carefully monitored to identify trends relating to government expenditure. Spending on children had significantly increased over the past few years across the various government departments. In total, 11 million children currently benefited from cash transfers, free basic education and school uniforms, early childhood development projects and assistance for families in need.

39. A grassroots campaign to end child marriage had been launched. A number of mechanisms had been set up to tackle offences of corruption affecting children, including through the protection of whistle-blowers and the centralization of procurement activities. The conviction rate for such offences remained high.

40. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** asked whether any studies had been carried out into the impact of budget cuts on children, such as planned reductions in staffing levels within the Department of Social Development. He asked what the consequences of those reductions would be on children's rights and what corresponding measures had been taken. Did the national authorities carry out studies into the budgetary requirements of children's policies prior to adopting new laws in that regard?

41. **Ms. Bogopane-Zulu** (South Africa) said that children's services would not be directly affected by the current round of budget cuts. Efforts were being made to ensure that there were sufficient social workers available to intervene in juvenile justice cases or to provide minors with urgent assistance. No critical posts relating to vulnerable groups would be affected by the planned reductions in staff expenditure relating to the Department of Social Development. Prior to adoption, all legislative proposals were assessed with regard to their constitutionality and the financial and institutional requirements for their implementation.

42. Customary marriages were registered with the Department of Home Affairs, in accordance with domestic legislation. A number of marriage-registration campaigns had been run and the authorities were working with community leaders to ensure that children were not forced to wed.

43. Corporal punishment in schools had been abolished and teachers breaking the law in that regard were prosecuted. There were plans to introduce a third amendment to the Children's Act outlawing corporal punishment in the home. However, prior to taking that step, the Government intended to launch a number of positive-parenting programmes to change attitudes in that regard. Efforts were being made to register teachers.

44. **Ms. Sandberg** asked when the third amendment to the Children's Act would be introduced. Past experience in other States parties showed that it was better to introduce legislation abolishing corporal punishment in the home prior to launching positive-parenting programmes.

45. **Ms. Nxumalo** (South Africa) said that the child-protection system and policy was being finalized. A discussion document on corporal punishment in the home had been prepared as a basis for the third amendment to the Children's Act, which was due to be put forward for consideration during the coming financial year.

46. **Ms. Bogopane-Zulu** (South Africa) said that measures would be taken to raise awareness of the issue of bullying among children and parents. A new early childhood development curriculum would also cover bullying, alongside respect for diversity.

47. The Department of Social Development had set up a programme, under which children victims of violence were provided with assistance relating to court cases and psychosocial support, family reunification and custody services. Care workers were assigned to vulnerable children in order to protect their interests, assist in the process of deinstitutionalization and enable them to remain in their communities of origin.

48. A white paper had been adopted on the rights of persons with disabilities, as a part of efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In the light of the publication of an official report on the potentially harmful impact of social media content on children, the National Assembly was currently considering amendments designed to strengthen the Film and Publications Act.

49. **Mr. Kgarabjang** (South Africa) said that the Films and Publications Act prohibited the use of children in the production of pornographic materials and the online dissemination of those materials. In 2015, a bill had been submitted to Parliament for consideration on the protection of children against harmful online content through the setting up of a system of pre-classification of materials, the alignment of domestic norms with international standards, the regulation of the online distribution of digital films and games, the strengthening of the power of the Films and Publication Board to monitor compliance with the Act and the introduction of regulations under which Internet service providers had an obligation to tackle online racism and hate speech. The South African Law Reform Commission was currently looking into issues relating to child pornography.

50. **Ms. Bogopane-Zulu** (South Africa) said that the Children's Parliament and Child Protection Week had been granted official status; a number of children's camps had been set up and the National Assembly carried out prior consultations with children relating to all matters that affected them. A national children's day had been created. The Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation and its civil society partners had developed an indicator relating to the State's obligation to facilitate children's participation. Measures were being taken to ensure access to the Internet and computer equipment in all South African schools and to specialized information and communications technologies in special schools.

51. **Ms. Nxumalo** (South Africa) said that the National Child Care and Protection Forum was a coordination mechanism made up of representatives of government departments and civil society bodies working in the childcare sector. Subcommittees set up within the Forum met regularly to examine legislative and policy issues and to exchange ideas and best practices. An interdepartmental committee had been created to monitor compliance with the Convention and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and to report back to the Forum in that regard.

52. Efforts were being made to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the Optional Protocol. The Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation assessed programmes for children. A study into violence against women and children had recently been carried out with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). An additional study had been completed on early childhood development, which had informed policy in that regard. As a part of Project Mikondzo, which enjoyed the support of Save the Children International, dialogues had been initiated with children. Efforts were being made to strengthen a model for proactive partnerships with civil society actors.

53. **Ms. Bogopane-Zulu** (South Africa) said that the Department of Basic Education had introduced the subject of children's rights into school curricula. A child-friendly version of the Convention had been disseminated in 11 different languages and a Braille version of the text was also available. The national authorities were attempting through platforms such as Project Mikondzo to engage with children in impoverished informal rural settlements and to ensure that they understood their rights and were able to report any violations in that regard. A forum had been set up to provide information on children's rights to senior citizens caring for children of parents affected by HIV/AIDS and a programme had been launched by Age-in-Action. A number of private-sector companies provided funding for projects designed to improve children's quality of life. Standards had been developed relating to advertising that targeted children and to the treatment and working hours of children employed in the advertising industry.

54. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she would like to know what the process for the late registration of a child's birth entailed and whether there was a cost incurred. With regard to those children who acquired South African nationality after the age of 18, she asked how they were able to travel outside the State party before they reached 18 years of age. She also wished to know how birth registration was carried out for all children born in prison, indigenous children and child refugees.

55. **Ms. Bogopane-Zulu** (South Africa) said that birth registration was free of charge in South Africa. There had been previous instances in which a child's birth had been registered after the 30-day time frame allowed to new parents. Mechanisms enabling late birth registration would be implemented from the beginning of 2017. Birth registration offices had been attached to every maternity ward in the country to ensure that all children were registered before they left hospital.

56. Children born in South Africa to parents not of South African nationality could be registered but were not necessarily granted South African nationality. The Ministry of Home Affairs had recently decreed that birth certificates must provide the details of both parents. In order to address the issue of child trafficking, a child required the consent of both parents when leaving South Africa. A child born in South Africa had the right to choose his or her nationality upon reaching the age of 18 and could qualify at that age for South African citizenship through naturalization.

57. When a child was granted refugee status, he or she was entitled by law to the same rights and benefits as South African children. The same applied for South African children born in a national prison and the Department of Correctional Services was responsible for overseeing the registration of such children. South African authorities were informed when South African children were born in a prison abroad and efforts were made to repatriate them. South Africa was engaged in information-sharing initiatives with other member States of the African Union to address the issue of unaccompanied minors and children travelling without documentation.

58. **Ms. Khazova** said that she was concerned by the foster care crisis in South Africa. There had been a significant increase in foster care placements, resulting in backlogs and lapses in foster care orders. This in turn had led to children in foster care not receiving the payments to which they were entitled under the Foster Care Grant system. She asked what steps the Government was taking to address the issue. In addition, given that Foster Care Grants were more than double the amount of Child Support Grants, children in kinship care were often placed in foster care to benefit from the higher grants. She wondered how the delegation viewed the proposal to provide a top-up to the Child Support Grant for orphans in the care of relatives, and whether the procedure for such relatives to receive financial support could be simplified. She asked why there had been an increase in the number of children being placed in residential care, and what measures had been put into place to improve the quality of care in residential care institutions, to increase the funding of child and youth care centres, to improve the monitoring of such centres, and to ensure that they were all registered institutions.

59. With regard to adoption, she would be interested to learn whether the bill currently tabled before Parliament contained provisions for shortening the lengthy adoption procedure in South Africa. She was also concerned by reports that the bill would aim to prohibit intercultural adoption and that there had already been cases of African children being removed from white adoptive families. She asked whether such reports were true and whether the State party intended to ratify the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance.

60. She raised questions on the quality of education in South Africa. Budget funds allocated to education were unevenly distributed, which resulted in some schools having a very poor infrastructure. Common problems included a shortage of textbooks; lack of water supply, toilet facilities and electricity; an insufficient number of teachers and poor quality teaching; a high dropout rate; teenage pregnancy and sexual violence in schools. She asked what steps were being taken to tackle such issues. With regard to indigenous children, she wished to know whether measures had been taken to ensure that they were taught in their native languages and what land rights they enjoyed from a legal point of view.

61. **Ms. Parsi** said that she was concerned that the majority of prisons in South Africa sought to keep mothers who had been incarcerated together with their children, and that the Judicial Inspectorate had reported on the difficulties experienced by mothers in prison when attempting to register the birth of their child. There were also reports that it was difficult for mothers in prison to contact their families. She asked what the Government had done to address such issues.

62. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** said that children with disabilities were still subjected to discrimination in South Africa. He wanted to know whether the Government would take steps to collect disaggregated data on children with disabilities, whether the Government intended to draft comprehensive policies to protect the rights of such children, and what steps were being taken to increase the school attendance rate of such children. Moreover, he noted that there were a number of obstacles to ensuring inclusive education, such as the lack of specialized teachers, funding and awareness of inclusive education as a right for persons with disabilities. In addition, schools discriminated against children with disabilities by limiting the number of subjects that they were taught. He asked what measures were being taken by the Government to improve the situation.

63. Furthermore, he would appreciate a comment from the delegation on the following: what measures, both rehabilitative and other, were in place to protect child victims of armed conflict who had entered South Africa from such countries as Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo; what policies and support measures were in place to prevent children from being recruited into drug trafficking and other forms of child labour; how children had been involved in the drafting of the new strategy on street children, and how the Government ensured respect for the best interests of the child during family reunification or the placement of a child in care.

64. With regard to juvenile justice, he asked whether the Government was planning to revise the age of criminal responsibility, whether juvenile detention facilities suffered from overcrowding, whether it was true that children in care were on occasion placed in the same centres as those in conflict with the law, whether children in detention still enjoyed access to education and health care, whether the Government employed alternative measures to deprivation of liberty, and whether the Government could explain the alarmingly low conviction rate for those who had committed crimes against children and how it was seeking to improve child victim support.

65. **Ms. Oviedo Fierro** said that she wished to know what regulations and public policies had been adopted to encourage breastfeeding, how the Government regulated advertisements for breastmilk substitutes, and whether breastfeeding mothers at work were given time during the day to express milk.

66. She noted that workers responsible for supporting refugee children and child asylum seekers did not necessarily have adequate training. There had been cases of such children suffering sexual abuse at the hands of authorities entrusted with supporting them and she wanted to know how the perpetrators had been punished and what measures had been taken to prevent such abuse from recurring. She asked whether unaccompanied minors were able to apply for asylum in order to receive identity papers, whether the Government intended to legislate to allow the permanent settlement of child refugees and asylum seekers, whether steps had been taken to collect disaggregated data on child asylum seekers, migrants and refugees, and whether studies had been conducted on child victims of human trafficking.

67. **Ms. Parsi** said that she would like to know what the Government was doing to address the mismanagement of health resources and to ensure access to essential services for children, particularly those in remote areas; how the Government intended to remove barriers to accessing the Child Support Grant for vulnerable categories of children, such as undocumented children, teenage mothers and children suffering from AIDS; how, given the high rate of teenage pregnancy and illegal abortion clinics in South Africa, the Government intended to enhance the awareness of safe sex among young persons, the distribution of condoms and other forms of contraception, and access to services for the safe termination of pregnancy; when the Government would implement a national plan on drug control in order to tackle the issue of substance abuse among young people; whether the Government had data concerning the involvement of children in drug trafficking and data on the prevalence of mental illness among children; what support was offered to such children;

what supplementary measures were available to prevent mother-to-child transmission of AIDS and to improve early diagnosis; whether the Government had implemented a national food strategy to address the issue of malnutrition; how the Government monitored food quality and what measures were in place to reduce the imbalance between the quality of life in cities and rural areas.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.